

**Niles Fire Station # 2**  
**Notes of Community Meeting**  
Wednesday, January 5, 2005 held 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Washington Township Veterans Memorial Hall

The purpose of these notes is to summarize and record the public input received and staff responses given on January 5, 2005, regarding the Niles Fire Station #2 potential siting on two parcels located at G Street and Niles Boulevard.

1. Approximately 48 people attended the meeting about the potential siting of a replacement fire station on two parcels located at the corner of G Street and Niles Boulevard.

Officials present included Vice Mayor Dominic Dutra, City Manager Fred Diaz, Fire Chief Bill Reykalin, HARB Board members Andy MacRae, Al Minard, and Jill Singleton.

Staff present included Assistant City Engineer Jim Pierson, Fire Bond Project Manager Jake Lavin, Fire Captain Mike Avila, Senior Engineer Ron Fong, Associate Planner Barbara Meerjans, and Redevelopment Project Manager Luke Connolly. Project Architect Bill Louie of WLC Architects was also present.

2. The majority of the questions focused on
  - a) Having good design aesthetics for the proposed G Street building
  - b) Discussing the merits of the G Street location versus other sites
  - c) Concerns regarding the historical elements at the G Street site.
3. Overall, it was an excellent meeting of community discussion and input.
4. The following specific questions and staff responses were shared:

- a) Did we consider locating the Fire Station at another location such as ....

- i. In the Plaza Area? Fire Stations are historically part of town squares.

*Response: Yes, however we did not pursue it because of the interest in maximizing retail opportunities and because of the potential function and safety conflicts during special events.*

- ii. On Mission Blvd?

*Response: Yes, but we did not pursue this site because it is outside the area for maximum response time coverage. The site location requires using the Sullivan Underpass to go west which hampers response time due to the geometry of the street alignment. It is too far east, and places fire resources on the opposite side of the railroad system, and would also place the project closer to the Hayward Fault.*

iii. On F Street / Niles Blvd? Land Swap?

*Response: We examined the possibility and did not pursue it because the site is outside the area for maximum response time coverage. Moving further north than G Street only benefits Union City and hurts response coverage for Fremont. Additionally, F Street (47 feet) is narrower than G Street (60 feet), which makes turning more difficult. The F Street site is inside the Niles Redevelopment Area, but north of Sullivan Underpass, which puts the site too far north to be a gateway opportunity to the main Niles retail area.*

iv. Nursery Avenue area?

*Response: It was considered and not pursued for several reasons. One, it is too far north to maximize response time coverage for Fremont. Second, the Hayward Fault Alquist-Priolo earthquake zone constrains the development of parcels in the Niles/Nursery/Mission area.*

v. On the adjacent parcels to the existing station on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street?

*Response: We examined the possibility and did not pursue it because we did not want to relocate residents; and because of the costs of acquiring sites that have existing development. Vacant parcels were our first focus.*

vi. On the existing site on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street? Too small a site? Would be monster home?

*Response: We examined the possibility and are pursuing other interests. Concerns were raised about the size and height of the station being too large for too small a parcel. Concerns were also raised about the close proximity to the other existing residences. However, it is still a viable alternate site considering service delivery and the project budget.*

vii. In the middle of the commercial district? Not in the middle of the commercial district? Economic impacts?

*Response: We examined the possibility and did not believe putting the station in the middle of the commercial district would be affordable given the value of existing business parcels. There was also concern the station could be construed or perceived to be a disruption to the flow of businesses. Special events that are traditional to Niles District can impose operational challenges to the Fire Department. Any station site selection should keep this fact in mind.*

viii. On the Derby Club/ Gas Station Area?

*Response: We examined the possibility and did not pursue it because of the interest in maximizing retail opportunities and because of the potential safety conflicts with traffic coming around the curve from the south. Also, the cost of decontamination and the geometry of the site ruled this location out.*

- ix. On the Niles Community Park at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street?

*Response: We examined the possibility and thought it might be viable as a potential station, however it requires replacement parklands, which historically very difficult and expensive to find.*

- x. On the Henkels site at the south end of Niles Boulevard?

*Response: We examined the possibility and thought the cost of decontamination would be overwhelming. Also, it is further south than desirable for maximum response coverage.*

b) Questions regarding the G Street site

- i. Who is responsible for the costs of hazardous materials cleanup on G Street?

*Response: The seller is responsible. It will be part of the negotiated appraised price during acquisition.*

- ii. Did you consider traffic safety at G Street?

*Response: We always consider traffic safety. There are other Fremont Fire stations on busy streets which we consider safe; and we believe that the G Street can also be a safe location.*

- iii. Can there be a traffic signal on Sullivan and Mission?

*Response: We can consider the possibility and whether or not the intersection warrants a signal. The budget currently does not consider it; and the location is under CALTRANS jurisdiction, which is another hurdle.*

- iv. Is water pollution a concern at G street site given the contamination?

*Response: Water comes from the Alameda County Water District, and not directly from ground water at the site. The amount of surface contamination from prior gas station uses will be abated before construction and should not be a concern for using the site.*

- v. What impact will a G Street site have on the Flea Market?

*Response: The G Street location is the northern edge of the street closure and would be nominally impacted by the Flea Market and would have nominal impacts on the Flea Market.*

- vi. Why exit on Niles Boulevard? Isn't G Street safer?

*Response: It provides the optimum response for movement. Exiting onto G Street is restrictive because of the street widths and the impacts on parking. The Fire Dept. is always concerned with safety and has experience with stations with exits onto busier streets in Fremont than this location.*

- vii. Will a temporary firehouse be needed for this G Street site?

*Response: No. Re-building on the existing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street site will require a temporary firehouse, currently contemplated at Niles Community Park on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.*

- viii. Was pedestrian safety during Niles events a consideration?

*Response: The Fire Dept has been and will be handling response safety during all Niles events. The location of the G Street site does not change how the fire department will respond during a Niles street closure.*

- ix. Will a firehouse at the G Street site provide 24/7 presences on the boulevard, and be a security deterrence in the area?

*Response: The fire station personnel will be on duty 24/7. The level of security this site may provide to the area is unknown and difficult to assess. Placing the station on a prominent gateway location to the commercial area might be a positive influence on preventing loitering and crime, but is not a guarantee.*

- x. Will the City adhere to the same alley improvement requirements a private developer would be required to perform?

*Response: Yes. If the parcel development requires alley access and improvements, then the City will adhere to the same development standards as would be required for private development. At this time, conceptual designs do not show a need for use of the alley at the G Street site. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Street site would require alley improvements.*

- xi. Will the City own the alley if it uses the G Street site?

*Response: That is a legal question that the City Attorney is better suited to address. Ownership of the alleys in Niles has not been resolved at this time.*

- xii. Will the G Street site be too small and force the City to develop a two-story firehouse which is not desirable according to the Newark City Engineer Dennis Jones?

*Response: The Fremont Fire Department believes that a two-story firehouse is very desirable and is safe. Many jurisdictions use two-story houses. We will check in with Newark to consider their experience, but believe Fremont can make it happen properly without undue concerns or issues. The site is not too small.*

- xiii. What happens to the old 2<sup>nd</sup> Street firehouse if the G Street site is selected?

*Response: The City Council has not decided whether it will be surplus property or not; or where the sales proceeds will be allocated to.*

- xiv. Will the City comply with zoning Floor Area Ratios?

*Response: The City will comply with all zoning / planning regulations the same as a private owner would for the proposed use. The proposed project is subject to site and*

*architectural review by both the Historic Architectural Review Board and the Planning Commission.*

c) Concerns regarding the G Street site's historic elements

- i. Did we consider the site is the former location of the Essanay Studio and that the site has historic significance?

*Response: A historic resources report has been ordered to evaluate the historical significance and consideration on the G Street Site.*

- ii. Can the large skylights at the Essanay Studio be replicated into the Fire Station apparatus bays?

*Response: That is a possibility we can consider.*

- iii. Did we consider the Wurster design of the Dr. Grau building has historic significance?

*Response: A historic resources report has been ordered to evaluate the historical significance and consideration on the G Street Site. The building is old enough for consideration on a historic register, but age is insufficient alone to make it a historic resource. The report will provide appropriate analysis.*

- iv. Can the G Street site incorporate recognition of the Wurster design of the Dr. Grau building into the fire station?

*Response: That is a possibility we can consider, however the historic significance of the structure has yet to be determined. It will be addressed in the pending historic resources report that has been ordered to evaluate the historical significance and consideration of the G Street Site.*

- v. Tearing down the Wurster building is a concern
- vi. Take a look at the Wurster building before getting too concerned
- vii. Wurster is not historically significant

*Response: There are different opinions in the community regarding the Wurster structures. A historic resources report has been ordered to provide a professional evaluation of the historical significance and consideration on the G Street Site.*

- viii. When was the last time the City of Fremont destroyed a historic resource?

*Response: Generally, City policies call for the preservation of historic resources. There have been rare instances that the City, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has allowed historic resources to be demolished. The Santos House was allowed to be demolished to allow housing to be built while the Santos Barn was preserved from the same site. The Irvington Body Shop and the Irvington Hotel will be demolished for the Washington*

*Boulevard Grade Separation. The historic analysis will be available for public review and comment during the environmental assessment of the proposed project.*

- ix. Can the City use the G Street site without impacting the Wurster building?

*Response: At this time, conceptual layouts show the Wurster building would have to be demolished to allow the firehouse to fit on the corner. The structures are too close to the property line to be avoided. Staff will be exploring alternative designs to use the empty corner lot only.*

- x. Can the City use the G Street corner site without the Wurster building site?

*Response: At this time, conceptual layouts show we need both parcels. However, we are re-examining the setback requirements to see if using only the corner parcel is possible.*

d) The design should

- i. Be attractive to enhance Niles;
- ii. Allow opportunity for community input on the building architecture;
- iii. Make a design choice available to the public prior to a decision on the Wurster Building is made;
- iv. Incorporate the architectural details of Niles;
- v. Reflect that Niles is a one-sided railroad town which is historically unique

*Response: Our interest is providing community input and obtaining a gateway presence into Niles with the firehouse. There will be future community meetings to discuss the aesthetics and site plan.*

- e) These notes reflect the discussion and dialogue held at the meeting. Errors, corrections, omissions and corrections should be brought to the attention of Senior Civil Engineer Ron Fong, 510/494.4778 or [Rfong@ci.fremont.ca.us](mailto:Rfong@ci.fremont.ca.us).

f) Comments regarding next steps should go to the Fire Bond Team

- Fire Bond Project Manager Rob Kalkbrenner, 510/494-4428, [Rkalkbrenner@ci.fremont.ca.us](mailto:Rkalkbrenner@ci.fremont.ca.us)
- Fire Captain Mike Avila, 510/494-4211, [Mavila@ci.fremont.ca.us](mailto:Mavila@ci.fremont.ca.us)
- Senior Engineer Ron Fong, 510/494-4778, [Rfong@ci.fremont.ca.us](mailto:Rfong@ci.fremont.ca.us)

g) Next Steps entail

- Appropriations to fund the design and staff cost efforts
- Completion of historical report
- Obtaining City Council direction on the G Street site
- Developing Conceptual design layout on the corner for consideration
- Evaluating the costs to stay within budget
- Planning the next community meeting
- Preparing an updated timeline schedule reflecting the above